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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4652

RUEHIA/USICA WASHDC

INFO RUEBQD/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 3992

RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1728

RUSBAZ/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 7046

RUGMHR/AMEMBASSY TEHRAN 2308

BT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KABUL 5243

JOINT STATE/USICA MESSAGE

USICA FOR NEA, ECA; STATE FOR NEA/PAB

E.O. 12065: GDS 7/10/85 (MORLEY, GARY G.) OR-ICA

TAGS: PINS, PINT, AF

SUBJ: KABUL UNIVERSITY: TROUBLE ON CAMPUS

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT)

2. SUMMARY: ARRESTS OF PROFESSORS AND CONSCRIPTION OF STUDENTS AT KABUL UNIVERSITY ARE RAISING TENSION THERE. EPISODES OF VIOLENCE HAVE BEEN REPORTED ON CAMPUS. SOVIET INFLUENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY HAS INCREASED, AND SOVIETS ARE BEING IDENTIFIED WITH THE DECLINING QUALITY OF EDUCATION AS THE REGIME EXPANDS THE SIZE OF THE STUDENT BODY RAPIDLY, PARTICULARLY WITH KHALQI FAITHFUL. END SUMMARY.

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3. SEVERAL CONVERGING CAUSES HAVE BEGUN TO REVEAL STRAINS AT THE UNIVERSITY. THE DRA HAS EXPANDED THE SIZE OF THE STUDENT BODY RAPIDLY, PARTICULARLY WITH KHALQI FAITHFUL, BUT STAFF AND PHYSICAL PLANT HAVE NOT KEPT PACE. ACCORDING TO SOME RPO-
FESSORS, AS MANY AS 4,000 NEW STUDENTS WERE ENROLLED AT THE KABUL CAMPUS IN MARCH AND APRIL. THAT WOULD BE A 53 PERCENT INCREASE OVER THE 7,500-STUDENT ENROLLMENT LAST YEAR. MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION MAHMOUD SOOMA, IN A CONVERSATION AT THE JULY 5 RECEPTION, SAID THERE ARE ABOUT 10,000 STUDENTS AT THE CAMPUS, UP 53 PERCENT SINCE THE APRIL 1978 COUP. (HE TOLD ANOTHER OFFICER, HOWEVER, THAT THERE ARE 11,500 STUDENTS ENROLLED.) SOOMA ADMITTED THAT THE RAPID EXPANSION WAS "CAUSING PROBLEMS IN FOUR AREAS -- LACK OF CLASSROOM SPACE, LACK OF DORMITORIES, LACK OF INSTRUCTORS, AND SOME REDUCTION IN THE QUALITY OF PREPARATION" OF INCOMING STUDENTS FOR UNIVERSITY-LEVEL STUDY. HE WAS OPTIMISTIC THAT "CONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT" UNDER THE FIVE-YEAR PLAN WOULD ALLEVIATE THE "GROWING PAINS." AT THE SAME TIME, HE ESTIMATED THAT STUDENTS IN THE "HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM" WOULD DOUBLE IN FIVE YEARS, FROM ABOUT 20,000 PRESENTLY, AND THAT "THE DIFFICULTIES OF TRYING TO KEEP PACE WITH THE EXPANSION WILL LONG BE WITH US." (THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM INCLUDES KABUL UNIVERSITY, NANGARHAR UNIVERSITY AND THE POLYTECHNICS. REPORTEDLY, THE TEACHER TRAINING ACADEMIES, NOW IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, WILL SOON BE BROUGHT UNDER THE MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION.) SOOMA SAID ONE PRIORITY AIM WILL BE TO ESTABLISH SATELLITE UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES AROUND THE COUNTRY. THE FIRST TWO, HE SAID WILL BE COMPLETED AT MAZAR-I-SHARIF AND KANDAHAR UNDER THE FIVE-YEAR PLAN.

4. THE INCREASE OF YOUNG KHALQIS (NICKNAMED "ROBOTS") AT KABUL UNIVERSITY HAS KINDLED POLITICAL FRICTION IN A STUDENT BODY PREVIOUSLY A STRONGHOLD OF PARCHAMIST SENTIMENT. IN THE MONTHS FOLLOWING THE COUP, A NUMBER OF PARCHAM SUPPORTERS IN BOTH THE FACULTY AND STUDENT BODY OSTENSIBLY CHANGED ALLEGIANCE TO THE KHALQ. AS RECENTLY AS SIX MONTHS AGO, ONE CLOSE OBSERVER ESTIMATED, LEFT-WING POLITICAL OPINION ON CAMPUS HAD BEEN ABOUT 60-40 IN FAVOR OF THE KHALQIS OVER THE PARCHAMISTS. THAT RATIO HAS DECAYED STEADILY, HE SAID, AND KHALQIS ARE AGAIN IN THE MINORITY TO PARCHAMISTS.

5. SOVIET INFLUENCE AND PRESENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY HAS INCREASED, AND THEY ARE BEING IDENTIFIED WITH THE DECLINING QUALITY OF EDUCATION THERE. A RUSSOPHILE RECTOR POLEAXED ENGLISH, GERMAN, AND FRENCH AS LANGUAGES OF INSTRUCTION, CRIPPLING SEVERAL FACULTIES, ESPECIALLY ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE. LECTURES ARE NOW IN RUSSIAN (THOUGH THAT MAY CHANGE AGAIN AS PUSHTU SPEAKERS CONTINUE TO GAIN INFLUENCE), WHILE TEXTBOOKS ARE STILL IN ENGLISH. "AND EACH IS IRRELEVANT TO THE OTHER," SAID A FOURTH-YEAR ENGINEERING STUDENT. MEANWHILE, RUSSIAN LANGUAGE STUDY HAS RECEIVED A STRONG BOOST. RECENT DRA-SOVIET AGREEMENTS PROVIDE FOR UNIVERSITY-WIDE COURSES IN RUSSIAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE AND THE INTRODUCTION OF MATERIALS IN THAT LANGUAGE. SIMULTANEOUSLY, STUDENT AND FACULTY EXCHANGES WITH THE WEST ARE DIMINISHING AND THOSE WITH SOCIALIST NATIONS, PARTICULARLY THE SOVIET UNION, ARE SPIRALING.

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RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY TEHRAN 9399

BT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KARAI 5243

JOINT STATE/USICA MESSAGE

USICA FOR NEA, ECA; STATE FOR NEA/PAP

11.

6. THE REGIME HAS STARTED PUTTING POLITICALLY UNRELIABLE PERSONS ON A SAMPLING: FORMER RECTOR DR. M. NAIDAN, FACULTY OF LAW AND POLITICAL SCIENCE (PH.D., FRANCE); DR. GARFUD AREFI, FACULTY OF LAW AND POLITICAL SCIENCE (PH.D., UNIVERSITY OF INDIANA); PROF. ALI AGA TALUKHI, FACULTY OF ECONOMICS; PROF. HADISULHAQIYAH, FACULTY OF LETTERS (M.A., MICHIGAN STATE); PROF. QASIM KASHIMI, FACULTY OF LETTERS; DR. A. RAZAQ FALHAL, FACULTY OF LETTERS (PH.D., PENN STATE). ONE CASE: A DOCTOR IN THE FACULTY OF MEDICINE (AND THE HUSBAND OF A USICA EMPLOYEE) WAS CHASED FROM HIS OFFICE AND TAKEN TO THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR. FROM THERE HE HAS APPARENTLY DISAPPEARED. AFTER A WEEK OF FRUSTRATED WAITING, A DISCREET INQUIRY BY THE FAMILY BROUGHT THE STERN REPLY, "BE PATIENT." AFTER FIVE WEEKS, THE FAMILY INQUIRED AGAIN. "WHY ARE YOU BEING SO IMPATIENT?" THEY WERE ASKED. RELATIVES HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO LEARN WHERE OR WHY THE DOCTOR IS BEING DETAINED OR EVEN WHETHER HE IS STILL ALIVE.

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